

The Theatres and their Plays

Woman in the Drama More Difficult Than in Real Life

Mme. Beaudet of 'The Wife With a Smile' Places More Emphasis on the Little Troubles Than Her Living Counterpart.

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

THE women of the recent drama are taking life seriously, more seriously it seems than they are accustomed to in real existence. There is, for instance, Mme. Beaudet, in "The Wife With a Smile," who seems to place such an emphasis on the little troubles that after a while they exert a pressure that all but crushes the life out of her. She has to take aspirin because of the vexatious habits of her bustling little husband. The way he arranges the flowers tightly in a bowl to keep them from falling out makes her shudder. His adjustment of the sofa cushions sends a chill down her spine. He likes to see them stretched across the back of the sofa more or less in accordance with their size rather than piled up in an artistic disorder at one end.

There is of course some excuse for the agitation she felt after he tried to make her go to hear "Faust," which she no longer enjoyed. Most women do not insist that an opera must be altogether to their liking before your husband gets up a party. Yet in any country it would have been undeniably brutal to act as M. Beaudet did when he commanded the male to bring his wife's hat and cloak into the drawing room.

He apologized the next day. But already Mme. Beaudet had loaded they are willing to go. The case seems different in France. Here it is the wives who like the opera. Husbands are likely to be indifferent even if they must not be coerced. They will usually get out of it if they can.

In France, however, women still follow the initiative of the husband. Probably it is after all rather heinous to refuse to go to the opera when the pistol he was in the habit of flourishing about and pointing at his head. So the crisis had to come when he aimed at her to show how he would treat any wife of his who took a lover. It was rather the best minute in two acts that he should think in his egotism she had meant the bullet for herself while she in reality only intended to get rid of him. For once Mme. Beaudet's agitation seemed to be justified. With the loaded pistol in his hand her husband really was a figure to be feared.

Yet she worried altogether out of proportion to the discomfort that his little peculiarities caused her. She took the flowers and the table and the household accounts and the locked piano too hard. Other women in life find it possible to overlook the little vexations their husbands cause them.

Habit of Being Late.

"Don't's habit of being always late," one of them said the other night, "has been the one tragedy of our married lives. And he is always late. I must always wait on him."

He was late that night and made not only his wife but the man who was taking them to the play half an hour tardy. But she made no particular point of dwelling on the incident. After a becoming sigh, she said no more, and apparently took as much pleasure out of her husband's society as if he were always ahead of time.

"If you don't stop playing with that dog," another wife said to her husband as he romped mildly with the Irish terrier in the drawing room before dinner, "I shall jump out of my skin. I have been on the go since 9 o'clock this morning. You know, Rich will play with the dog although he knows it makes me nervous." That was all she said. Under the same provocation Mme. Beaudet might have gone through various sorts of martyrdom. She would have at least neglected her coiffure, which she did, apparently, all the time. But this wife did not return to the subject. Husband let the dog alone and dinner passed off quietly. Of course, had he refused to abandon the terrier, the evening might have not been so pleasant.

In both cases these two women had their legitimate grievances. Yet they were philosophical about them. Prolonged discussion might have brought on "vapors" as severe as those which drove the heroine of "The Wife With a Smile," which the Theatre Guild has produced at the Garrick Theatre, to suicides. In life, women seem therefore much more reasonable in such matters. It may be, on the other hand, that the playwrights from choice select the ladies who are more or less neurotic.

They are certainly more interesting if one is to observe them pathologically. Possibly Mme. Beaudet's sensitiveness was the result of the warm weather. She snuck the heat and wanted the windows left open—except when the noise became too great. Then they had to be immediately closed. But the trouble certainly was not caused by the awakening of spring. It could readily have been, however, the twilight of spring that so upset the wife with the smile. Undeniably the source of her else than in her husband's talent for nagging.

The New Stage Realism.

Some of the mistaken realists of the past used to cook a turkey on the stage to suggest, through the savory reminder of home, the domestic atmosphere of a family. Another less extravagant producer satisfied himself with frying real bacon to emphasize the humble but genuine feeling of another family less highly situated in the world. The appeal to the nose continues.

In "Kiki," David Belasco's new play at his theatre, however, it is fragrant, overwhelmingly, powerfully, almost staggeringly fragrant. When Miss Kiki, formerly of the Montpeliers Music Hall, seeks to paint the lily which nature has already made her the powder puff comes out of the capacious bag she carries. As she shook the powder over all that was visible of her, and much that was not, the odor floated back to the rear of Mr. Belasco's auditorium.

When, in a later scene, the heroine sprayed what she described as heliotrope perfume over herself and the landscape adjoining, the scent wandered back everlastingly to at least the last orchestra seats. Thus realism which arrives through the nose need

not always bring the family table to mind.

These feminine traits in the experienced heroine did not exhaust the views of her character. She came to notice through her prowess in manipulating a hatpin. Since that is a recognized weapon of self-defence in musical comedy circles, she was not distinctly different from her kind. She did show how much desperation had taught her when she gripped with the man servant and rolled about the floor in a scarp that would have been declared a foul by any referee that did not allow biting, scratching and hair pulling. If Miss Urie at any time in the character of the little gutter snipe almost lost the sympathy of her spectators it was during this bout. But she soon got it back.

Without too much emphasis she suggests just the bitter struggle for life that has made her expert in this kind of self-defence. Her poverty, her pluck and her deep affection finally pull her out of every depth into which she might almost have passed beneath the tolerance of the audience, which possessed in reality slight knowledge of this kind of a heroine. It was Miss Urie's richly varied and spontaneous acting in the faultless frame Mr. Belasco had prepared for her that made the audience altogether in love with M. Picard's heroine when

the curtain fell. The play has accomplished one important revolution in the taste of the theatre. It has proved that a heroine need not be white muslin and blond curls to win her public.

Here is a Youthful Farce.

"Her Salary Man" is so spontaneous and fresh in its fun that there is not the least difficulty in believing that Forrest Rutherford really did write the farce to please and entertain himself. Easy writing makes notoriously hard reading. So the plays written without effort are rarely to be witnessed in the same facile way. The new play at the Cort Theatre is as a matter of fact highly diverting in the manner of irresponsible and joyous farce.

It would be interesting to know how Mr. Rutherford happened to be acquainted with so many of the rules that result in good craftsmanship. If "Her Salary Man" is a first play, and if he wrote it only for amusement, how does he happen to know so much about the right kind of stage writing? There are some very expert scenes, and if Mr. Rutherford was naturally able to arrange them so well, it might almost be correct to call him a born dramatist. It is altogether possible that his native wit enabled him to write the

sprightly dialogue. But who told him how to exhibit it with such professional certainty? There are, of course, more ways than one to study the art of the playwright.

Mr. Rutherford may have absorbed his obvious knowledge by seeing plays and remembering how they were made. There are not many playwrights skillful enough to learn by that method. But some of them do, and he may be one of the gifted few.

There is little or nothing amateurish about "Her Salary Man." It may not have enduring success and that may be due to its somewhat outmoded and theatrical theme. But the author deserves to be congratulated on such a strikingly excellent piece of work as his first play. He will undoubtedly write more. It seems just as certain that they will all be worth seeing. Mr. Rutherford is a genuine talent in the theatre.

NEWMAN ON "ICELAND."

E. M. Newman offers his third travel talk this evening at Carnegie Hall. "Iceland and Spitzbergen" will be brought before you and the travel lover will find that Iceland is not a land of ice, but that it has fine scenery and a comparatively salubrious climate in a group of motion pictures and color views. Next week Mr. Newman presents "Norway, Sweden and Denmark."



Miss EDITH KING in "Thank U"...Longacre.



Miss MARGALO GILLMORE in "Alias Jimmy Valentine" Gaiety



Miss LOUISE GROODY in "Good Morning Dearie" Globe



Miss MARILYN MILLER Who Has Passed Her 400th Performance in "SALLY" New Amsterdam



Miss HELEN MAC KELLAR in "Alias Jimmy Valentine" 48th ST Theatre.



Miss MILDRED KEATS in "Bombo" Jolson's 59th Street Theatre



Miss MARGARET MOWER in "The Fair Circassian" Republic.

Miss ELSIE FERGUSON in "The Varying Shore" Hudson



Miss LOUISE GROODY in "Good Morning Dearie" Globe

Manager Who Brought Jeritza Out Arrives Here

Hans Gregor, Vienna Opera Intendant, Observing the U. S. Leisurely.

By LUCIEN CLEVELS.

HANS GREGOR, intendant, or, in other words, manager of the Imperial Opera House in Vienna during some of the most brilliant days of its existence, is now in New York. He is observing the United States leisurely and is probably more impressed by the great change since his first visit than by anything else. He was here thirty-five years ago when a student. But he tells the story best in his own words.

"While I was studying to become an engineer," he said, "one of my fellow students decided to make a trip during the holidays to New York. I thought that I would accompany him since I always had the idea that possibly I might come here to live when I had completed my education. How different New York was in those days! I remember the horse cars and how the city seemed to end at Central Park and what a wonder the Elevated seemed then! The city may be much greater now, but I was profoundly impressed even then with all I saw over here. When I went back it was with the firm determination to come over here when the time came for me to start the practice of engineering." But other interests soon claimed Mr. Gregor. He decided to become an impresario. So he went on the stage to learn something of the career from that side and acted at the Deutch and Lessing Theatres in Berlin. After a while he became impresario of the Opera Comique in Berlin. So successful was his conduct of that institution that he was called to the Imperial Opera House in Vienna, succeeding the restless Felix Weingartner, who had in turn, taken the place of Gustav Mahler. There Mr. Gregor remained until after the revolution in Austria. He went then to Switzerland, where he remained for the two years that intervened before he arrived here. His wife is an American and it was to visit her family that they went first to Boston.

The Opera in Vienna.

"The opera in Vienna," he said, "was a wonderful institution in the old days. There was never any question about money. It was only necessary for the intendant to keep, if possible, within the convention which was as liberal as we wanted it to be. The Emperor was never niggardly. Then the theatre itself is such a wonderful building. Franz Schalk, who was here in his early days, was our principal German conductor and we had as well an Italian who had charge of the Italian operas. Puccini, one of our first tenors, who can also sing his roles in Italian, is an American, Mme. Jeritza was one of our sopranos and in the coloratura repertoire there was Mme. Selma Kurz. In addition to the German works which were chiefly, of course, the Wagner music drama, we gave modern Italian operas. With Puccini's 'The Girl of the Golden West,' we had a genuine success."

When Mr. Gregor was at the Opera Comique in Berlin, he revived there Offenbach's "Conte d'Hoffmann," which had been shunned in the German speaking countries because it was the opera on the programme when the Rink Theatre in Vienna, was destroyed with such appalling loss of life. He gave gave the opera 500 times.

"It was invited to take the Intendancy of the Royal Opera House in Dresden," he told the reporter for THE NEW YORK HERALD, and was also asked to come to Berlin. But there is nothing to be done in north Germany. The situation in the southern cities is not so bad, but in the north it is heartbreaking."

"It is impossible to pay the artists enough to live on. They go constantly to sing for a few performances in other cities. It is impossible to forbid them, since they need the money. Even the orchestra players will go away to play at other theatres for a few appearances to earn enough to live on. Of course, there can be no discipline under such conditions. To conduct an opera house with any credit is impossible."

Mr. Gregor is in the meantime observing the American methods of theatre management and always wondering over the great difference between the city now and when he saw it first, thirty-five years ago. Before her marriage to the impresario his wife was a well known

Sothorn and Marlowe to End Run This Week

E. H. Sothorn and Julia Marlowe begin the last week of their New York season at the Century Theatre on Monday night. The success of their engagement in this city, it is stated, would warrant their continuing at the Century Theatre another month, but owing to their contracts for appearance in other cities of the country it has been impossible to extend their New York run. For their final week Mr. Sothorn and Miss Marlowe have arranged the following programme of plays: "The Taming of the Shrew" on Monday and Thursday nights, "The Merchant of Venice" on Tuesday and Friday nights, "Hamlet" on Wednesday night and Saturday matinee, and "Twelfth Night" on Saturday night.

"BOHEME" FOR BROOKLYN. "La Boheme" will be sung at Brooklyn Academy of Music Saturday night, December 10, by Mmes. Alda and Roselle and Messrs. O'Neill, Danise, Didon, Martini, Audino, Roschigian and Anagnin, Mr. Paol conducting.

Three New Plays and Two Revivals

MONDAY.

HUDSON THEATRE—Sam H. Harris will present Elsie Ferguson in "The Varying Shore," a new play by Zoe Akins, who has created a sort of disreputable angel—"The Sinner's Saint" they had called her in Monte Carlo. The play, dealing with her life there, in Paris and America, is in three acts, a prologue and an epilogue. The company includes Charles Francis, James Crane, Paul Everett, Rolfe Peters, Geraldine O'Brien and Blythe Day.

PROVINCETOWN THEATRE—Theodore Dreiser's "The Hand of the Potter," a four act play, will be presented by the Provincetown Players for the second bill of their season. The leading role will be played by J. Paul Jones and the cast includes Nathaniel Freyer, Doña Rubenstein, Esther Stockton, Dorothy Sawyer and Lutha J. Adler.

TUESDAY.

REPUBLIC THEATRE—"The Fair Circassian," a romance of the East in the West, by Gladys Unger, will be presented under the direction of Gertrude Newell. The cast includes Claude King, John H. Brewer, Margaret Mower, Ethel Dane, Elsie Unger and Robert Fischer. The play is staged by Clifford Brooke. Maurice Nitke composed the incidental music.

GARRICK THEATRES—By arrangement with the Theatre Guild, the Provincetown Players' production of "The Verve," by Susan Glaspell, will be Tuesday and continuing on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Miss Margaret Wycherly and the original cast and production will be presented.

WEDNESDAY.

PLAYHOUSE—William A. Brady will present Helen MacKellar and Charles Richman in an all star revival of George Broadhurst's drama, "Bohannon and Paid For," with Marie Nordstrom and Capt. William Harrigan appearing in the parts they played all over the world. Allen Atwell and Katya Prevon will complete the cast. The play tells a story of American married life and reveals the dilemma of a girl who has become the wife of a man different from the one she anticipated.

THURSDAY.

GAIETY THEATRE—Paul Armstrong's play, "Alias Jimmy Valentine," will be revived by George C. Tyler with a cast headed by Otto Kruger, Emmett Corrigan and Margalo Gillmore. Others in the company will be Mary Boland, William Ingersoll, Earle Brown, Edmund Egan, Harold Harsted, Andrew Lawlor, Lorna Volare and Grace Henderson. Hugh Ford directed the play, which is based on O. Henry's short story "A Retrieved Reformation."



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